

MFR 04016793

(R)

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Boston Center Field Site Interview with Robert Jones, Quality Assurance Officer, ZBW.

Type of event: Interview

Date: Monday, September 22, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Geoffrey Brown

Team Number: 8

Location: FAA Boston Air Route Center, Nashua, New Hampshire

Participants - Non-Commission: John R. Donnelly, FAA Senior Attorney [(781) 238 7045]

Participants - Commission: John Azzarello, Miles Kara, Geoffrey Brown

NOTE: Please refer to the recorded interview for a complete account.

Jones has been with the FAA for the last 14 years, 13 of which he has spent with ZBW. He is a full performance level controller, and a TMU supervisor. On 9/11 Jones was a Quality Assurance Specialist charged with processing the accident information for flight UAL175. Jones identified the threatening communications from UAL175 on the flight recording.

Jones explained to Commission staff the difference between an "accident package" and an "accident file". The package is developed and published by the FAA and has a defined scope and purpose. The file is all the information collected regarding an accident, and in this case contains a timeline created by Jones and his colleague. The timeline, which will be provided to the Commission through a request to FAA headquarters, was pieced together through the call toll records.

Based off his notes, Jones stated that at 1224UTC Area C reported a possible hijack. Jones went to 46R (Pete Zilowski). Jones then went to review the recording. He relayed the recording information to the Watchdesk. He confirmed that an "Arab" voice stated "we have some planes". Jones relayed this to Biggio immediately.

At 122456UTC Jones relayed another communication. At 1233359UTC Jones relayed the final communication. Jones estimates all three communications were told to Biggio at some point between 1233-1237 UTC. (CHECK TIMES).

At 122750UTC the supervisor at TMUY called Herndon to relay information on the

UNCLASSIFIED
COMMISSION SENSITIVE

likely hijacking.

At 1240UTC Dan Bueno requests to be put on a conference call with Herndon, and relays the information that AA11 had dropped speed, which he guessed might be a descent into NY Tracon airspace.

At 130355UTC Boston Center TMU tells internal facilities to ground stop all ZBW traffic.

At 131102UTC an order was issued to increase cockpit security.

At 1342 UTC all aircraft were ordered to return to airports, and a national ground stop was instituted.

Jones noted that at the time of the 9/11 attacks ZBW used reel to reel tapes for recording. Now they have digital audio. He noticed that there is a difference in terminology when Boston ATCs tried to relay information to NEADS. He thinks this lack of common terminology should be dealt with.

Jones explained that he understands Giant Killer as based out of Norfolk, Virginia and is control of Navy training exercises, and all warning areas off the east coast.

Jones stated that AA11 first became a primary target at 122112UTC. He noted that because they only had a primary Collin Scoggins attempted to contact NEADS to coordinate with their height finding capability (check on that). [REDACTED]

Jones also stated the pre 9/11 the WOC's prime role was to notify the other ATC centers of the ongoing information and operations.

Jones took Commission staff on a tour through the reel system of ZBW, and Commission staff has requested the complete accident file through FAA headquarters. It was during this tour that Jones explained to Commission staff that the communication from AA11 did not come from the American Airlines pilot keying the microphone covertly to inform authorities of the hijack. After the 9/11 attacks Jones assisted an FBI audio analyst in copying the recordings. The FBI analyst informed Jones that in analysis of the recording he could pick up spit in the speech patterns of the hijackers being recorded smacking the microphone. It was the FBI analyst's definitive conclusion that the hijackers were in position of the cockpit, and speaking directly into the microphone, at the time of the recording.

9/11 Law Enforcement Sensitive

COMMISSION SENSITIVE
UNCLASSIFIED